

JOHN GORDON WRIGHT LIBRARY
EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

KJ68.3

P286

CONSTITUTION ON THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY
HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI
ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964



ST. PAUL EDITIONS

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَخُفُّهُمْ دُونَهُ وَتِلْكَ أَسْمَاءُ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Beth Harbutho Library

[illegible]

Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

CONSTITUTION

ON THE

ORIENTAL CHURCHES

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY

HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964



ST. PAUL EDITIONS

N.C.W.C. Translation

Printed by the Daughters of St. Paul
Boston, Mass. 02130

ON EASTERN CHURCHES

1. The Catholic Church holds in high esteem the institutions, liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions and the established standards of the Christian life of the Eastern Churches, for in them, distinguished as they are for their venerable antiquity, there remains conspicuous the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers and that forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Universal Church. This sacred ecumenical council, therefore, in its care for the Eastern Churches which bear living witness to this tradition, in order that they may flourish and with new apostolic vigor execute the task entrusted to them, has determined to lay down a number of principles, in addition to those which refer to the Universal Church; all else is remitted to the care of the Eastern synods and of the Holy See.

THE INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES OR RITES

2. The Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government and who, combining together into various groups which are held together by a hierarchy, form separate churches or rites. Between these there exists an admirable bond of union, such that the variety within the Church in no way harms its unity; rather

it manifests it, for it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual church or rite should retain its traditions whole and entire and likewise that it should adapt its way of life to the different needs of time and place.

3. These individual churches, whether of the East or the West, although they differ somewhat among themselves in rite (to use the current phrase), that is, in liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline, and spiritual heritage, are, nevertheless, each as much as the others, entrusted to the pastoral government of the Roman Pontiff, the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme government over the Universal Church. They are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others as regards rite and they enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, also in respect of preaching the Gospel to the whole world (cf. Mk. 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff.

4. Means should be taken therefore in every part of the world for the protection and advancement of all the individual churches and, to this end, there should be established parishes and a special hierarchy where the spiritual good of the faithful demands it. The Ordinaries of the different individual churches with jurisdiction in one and the same territory should, by taking common counsel in regular meetings, strive to promote unity of action and with common endeavor to sustain common tasks, so as better to further the good of religion and to safeguard more effectively the ordered way of life of the clergy.

All clerics and those aspiring to sacred orders should be instructed in the rites and especially in the principles that must be applied in inter-ritual questions. The laity, too, should be taught as part of its catechetical education about rites and their rules.

Finally each and every Catholic, as also the baptized of every non-Catholic church or denomination who enters

to the fullness of the Catholic communion, must retain his own rite wherever he is, must cherish it and observe it, without prejudice to the right in special cases of persons, communities or areas, of recourse to the Apostolic See, which, as the supreme judge of inter-church relations, will, acting itself or through other authorities, meet the needs on the occasion in an ecumenical spirit, by the issuance of opportune directives, decrees or rescripts.

PRESERVATION OF THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

5. History, tradition and abundant ecclesiastical institutions bear outstanding witness to the great merit owing to the Eastern Churches by the Universal Church. The sacred council, therefore, not only accords to this ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage the high regard which is its due and rightful praise, but also unhesitatingly looks on it as the heritage of the Universal Church. For this reason it solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, have a full right and are in duty bound to rule themselves, each in accordance with its own established disciplines, since all these are praiseworthy from their venerable antiquity, more harmonious with the character of their faithful and more suited to the promotion of the good of souls.

6. All Eastern Rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. All these, then, must be observed by the Easterners themselves. Besides, they should attain to an even greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions.

Those who, by reason of their office or apostolic ministries, are in frequent communication with the Eastern Churches or their faithful should be instructed according as their office demands in the knowledge and veneration of the rites, discipline, doctrine, history and character of the Easterners. To enhance the efficacy of their apostolate, congregations and associations of Latin Rite working in Eastern countries or among Eastern faithful are earnestly counseled to found houses or even provinces of Eastern rite, as far as this can be done.

EASTERN RITE PATRIARCHS

7. The patriarchate, as an institution, has existed in the Church from the earliest times and was recognized by the first ecumenical councils.

By the name Eastern Patriarch, is meant the Bishop to whom belongs jurisdiction over all Bishops, not excepting metropolitans, clergy and people of his own territory or rite, in accordance with canon law and without prejudice to the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.

Wherever an Ordinary of any rite is appointed outside the territorial bounds of the patriarchate, he remains attached to the hierarchy of the patriarchate of that rite, in accordance with canon law.

8. Though some of the patriarchates of the Eastern Churches are of earlier and some of later date, nonetheless all are equal in respect of patriarchal dignity, without however prejudice to the legitimately established precedence of honor.

9. By the most ancient tradition of the Church the Patriarchs of the Eastern Churches are to be accorded exceptional respect, seeing that each is set over his patriarchate as father and head.

This sacred council, therefore, determines that their rights and privileges should be re-established in accordance with the ancient tradition of each of the churches and the decrees of the ecumenical councils.

The rights and privileges in question are those that obtained in the time of union between East and West; they should, however, be adapted somewhat to modern conditions.

The Patriarchs with their synods are the highest authority for all business of the patriarchate, including the right of establishing new eparchies and of nominating Bishops of their rite within the territorial bounds of the patriarchate, without prejudice to the inalienable right of the Roman Pontiff to intervene in individual cases.

10. What has been said of Patriarchs is valid also in harmony with the canon law, in respect to major Archbishops, who are over the whole of some individual church or rite.

11. Seeing that the patriarchal office in the Eastern Church is a traditional form of government, the sacred ecumenical council ardently desires that new patriarchates should be erected where there is need, to be established either by an ecumenical council or by the Roman Pontiff.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

12. The sacred ecumenical council confirms and approves the ancient discipline of the sacraments existing in the Oriental Churches, as also the ritual practices connected with their celebration and administration and ardently desires that this should be re-established if there be need.

13. (The Minister of Confirmation) The established practice in respect of the minister of Confirmation that has

obtained from most early times among the Easterners should be fully restored. Therefore, priests validly confer this sacrament, using chrism blessed by a Patriarch or a Bishop.

14. All Eastern Rite priests, either in conjunction with Baptism or separately from it, can confer this sacrament validly on all the faithful of any rite including the Latin; licitly, however, only if the regulations both of the common and the particular, local law are observed. Priests, also, of Latin Rite, in accordance with the faculties they enjoy in respect of the administration of this sacrament, validly administer it also to the faithful of Eastern Churches; licitly if the regulations both of the common and of the particular law are observed.

15. (The Most Holy Eucharist) The faithful are bound to take part on Sundays and feast days in the Divine Liturgy or, according to the regulations or custom of their own rite, in the celebration of the Divine Office. That the faithful may be able more easily to fulfill their obligation, it is laid down that the period of time within which the precept should be observed extends from the vespers of the vigil to the end of the Sunday or the feast day. The faithful are earnestly exhorted to receive Holy Communion on these days, and indeed more frequently—yes, even daily.

16. (The Minister of Penance) Owing to the fact that the faithful of the different individual churches dwell intermingled with each other in the same area or territory, the faculties for hearing confessions duly and without restriction given to priests of any rite by their own Ordinaries extend to the whole territory of him who grants them and also to the places and faithful of any other rite in the same territory, unless the Ordinary of the place has expressly excluded this for places of his rite.

17. (The Diaconate and Minor Orders) In order that the ancient established practice in the Eastern Churches may flourish again, this sacred council ardently desires that the office of the permanent diaconate should, where it has fallen into disuse, be restored. The legislative authorities of each individual church should decide about the subdiaconate and the minor orders and the rights and obligations that attach to them.

18. (Mixed Marriages) To obviate invalid marriages when Eastern Catholics marry baptized Eastern non-Catholics and in order to promote fidelity in and the sanctity of marriage, as well as peace within the family, the sacred council determines that the canonical "form" for the celebration of these marriages is of obligation only for liceity; for their validity the presence of a sacred minister is sufficient, provided that what is by law to be observed is observed.

DIVINE WORSHIP

19. (The Sacred Seasons) It belongs only to an ecumenical council or to the Apostolic See to determine, transfer or suppress feast days common to all the Eastern Churches. On the other hand, to determine, transfer or suppress the feast days of any of the individual churches is within the competence not only of the Apostolic See but also of the patriarchal or archiepiscopal synod, due regard being had to the whole area and the other individual churches.

20. Until such time as all Christians are agreed on a fixed day for the celebration of Easter, with a view meantime to promoting unity among the Christians of the same area or nation, it is left to the Patriarchs or supreme authorities of a place to come to an agreement by the

unanimous consent and combined counsel of those affected to celebrate the Feast of Easter on the same day.

21. Individual faithful dwelling outside the area or territory of their own rite may follow completely the established custom of the place where they live as regards the law of the sacred seasons. In families of mixed rite it is permissible to observe this law according to one and the same rite.

22. (Divine Office) Eastern clerics and religious should celebrate in accordance with the prescriptions and traditions of their own established custom the Divine Office, which from ancient times has been held in high honor in all Eastern Churches. The faithful too should follow the example of their forebears and assist devoutly as occasion allows at the Divine Office.

23. (The Use of the Vernacular) It belongs to the Patriarch with his synod, or to the supreme authority of each church with the counsel of the Ordinaries, to regulate the use of languages in the sacred liturgical functions and, after reference to the Apostolic See, of approving translations into the vernacular of texts.

RELATIONS WITH SEPARATED BRETHREN

24. The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special duty of promoting the unity of all Christians, especially Eastern Christians, in accordance with the principles of the decree, "About Ecumenism," of this sacred council, by prayer in the first place, and by the example of their lives, by religious fidelity to the ancient Eastern traditions, by a greater knowledge of each other, by collaboration and a brotherly regard for objects and feelings.

25. If any separated Eastern Christian should, under

the guidance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, join himself to the unity of Catholics, no more should be required of him than what a bare profession of the Catholic faith demands. Eastern clerics, seeing that a valid priesthood is preserved among them, should be permitted to exercise the Orders they possess on joining the unity of the Catholic Church, in accordance with the regulations established by the competent authority.

26. (*Communicatio in sacris*: Common participation in things sacred) Such “*communicatio in sacris*” as harms the unity of the Church or involves formal acceptance of error or the danger of aberration in the faith, of scandal and indifferentism, is forbidden by divine law. On the other hand, pastoral experience shows clearly that, as regards our Eastern brethren, there should be taken into consideration the different cases of individuals, where neither the unity of the Church is hurt nor are there verified the dangers that must be avoided, but where the needs of the salvation of souls and their spiritual good are impelling motives. For that reason the Catholic Church has always adopted and now adopts rather a mild policy, offering to all the means of salvation and an example of charity among Christians, through participation in the sacraments and in other sacred functions and things. With this in mind, “lest because of the harshness of our judgment we be an obstacle to those seeking salvation” and in order more and more to promote union with the Eastern Churches separated from us, the sacred council lays down the following policy.

27. Without prejudice to the principles noted earlier, Eastern Christians who are in fact separated in good faith from the Catholic Church, if they ask of their own accord and have the right dispositions, may be admitted to the sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and the Unction of the Sick. Further, Catholics may ask for these same sacra-

ments from those non-Catholic ministers whose churches possess valid sacraments, as often as necessity or a genuine spiritual benefit recommends such a course and access to a Catholic priest is physically or morally impossible.

28. Further, without prejudice to the truth of those same principles, common participation by Catholics with their Eastern separated brethren in sacred functions, things and places is allowed for a good reason.

29. This conciliatory policy with regard to “*communicatio in sacris*” (participation in things sacred) with the brethren of the separated Eastern Churches is put into the care and control of the local Ordinaries, in order that, by combined counsel among themselves and, if need be, after consultation also with the Ordinaries of the separated churches, they may by timely and effective regulations and directives direct the intercourse of Christians.

30. The sacred council feels great joy in the fruitful, zealous collaboration of the Eastern and the Western Catholic Churches and at the same time declares: All these directives of law are laid down in view of the present situation till such time as the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern Churches come together into complete unity.

Meanwhile, however, all Christians, Eastern as well as Western, are earnestly asked to pray to God fervently and assiduously, nay, indeed daily, that, with the aid of the most holy Mother of God, all may become one. Let them pray also that the strength and the consolation of the Holy Spirit may descend copiously upon all those many Christians of whatsoever church they be who endure suffering and deprivations for their unwavering avowal of the name of Christ.

“Love one another with fraternal charity, anticipating one another with honor” (Rom. 12:10).

DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL

IN MASSACHUSETTS

50 St Paul's Ave
Jamaica Plain
Boston, Mass 02130
172 Tremont St
Boston, Mass 02111
381 Dorchester St
So Boston, Mass 02127
325 Main St.
Fitchburg, Mass.

IN NEW YORK

78 Fort Place
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301
625 East 187th St.
Bronx, N.Y.
39 Erie St.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

IN CONNECTICUT

202 Fairfield Ave.
Bridgeport, Conn. 06603

IN OHIO

141 West Rayen Ave.
Youngstown, Ohio 44503
Daughters of St. Paul
Cleveland, Ohio

IN TEXAS

114 East Main Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

IN CALIFORNIA

1570 Fifth Ave.
San Diego, Calif. 92101
278 - 17th Street
Oakland, California 94612

IN LOUISIANA

86 Bolton Ave.
Alexandria, La. 71303

IN FLORIDA

2700 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, Florida 33137

IN CANADA

8885 Blvd. Lacordaire
St. Leonard Deport-Maurice
Montreal, Canada
1063 St. Clair Ave. West
Toronto, Canada

IN ENGLAND

29 Beauchamp Place
London, S.W. 3, England

IN AFRICA

Box 4392
Kampala, Uganda

IN INDIA

Water Field Road Extension
Plot No. 143
Bandra, India

IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

2650 F.B. Harrison St.
Pasay City
Philippine Islands

IN AUSTRALIA

58 Abbotsford Rd.
Homebush N.S.W., Australia
226 Victoria Square
Adelaide, South-Australia
6 Muir Street
Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia

Papal Documents

- "SPONSA CHRISTI" - Pius XII 80 pages \$1.00
ADDRESSES OF PIUS XII TO CLOISTERED RELIGIOUS - \$1.25
CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASSES - Leo XIII \$.25
UNITY OF THE CHURCH - Leo XIII \$.25
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF YOUTH - Pius XI \$.25
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE - Pius XI \$.25
SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION - Pius XI \$.25
ATHEISTIC COMMUNISM - Pius XI \$.25
HOLY VIRGINITY - Pius XII \$.25
FUNCTION OF THE STATE IN THE MODERN
WORLD - Pius XII \$.25
THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST - Pius XII \$.25
THE SACRED LITURGY - Pius XII \$.25
NEAR THE CHAIR OF PETER - John XXIII \$.25
FROM THE BEGINNING OF OUR PRIESTHOOD - John XXIII \$.25
MATER ET MAGISTRA - John XXIII \$.25
PACEM IN TERRIS - John XXIII \$.25
CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY - promulgated by
Paul VI \$.25
ECCLESIAM SUAM - Paul VI \$.25
SUMMI DEI VERBUM and ADDRESS ON SEMINARIES
AND VOCATIONS - Paul VI \$.20
MOTION PICTURES - Pius XI \$.15
THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY -
Pius XII \$.15
GRATEFUL MEMORY - John XXIII \$.15
VETERUM SAPIENTIA - John XXIII \$.15
ORDINATIONES ad Constitutionem Apostolicam "Veterum Sapiencia"
Rite Exsequendam, - John XXIII \$.15
TO WOMEN RELIGIOUS - John XXIII \$.15
PAENITENTIAM AGERE - John XXIII \$.15
PEACE MESSAGE - John XXIII \$.05
DE LATINATIS STUDIO PROVEHENDO (Latin text) -
John XXIII \$.15
DECREE ON THE MEDIA OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION
promulgated by Paul VI \$.15
HEIGHTS OF HEROISM IN LIFE OF PIUS XII - Paul VI \$.05
TO ALL RELIGIOUS - Paul VI \$.15
INSTRUCTION ON THE LITURGY - issued by the Sacred
Congregation of Rites \$.25
CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH - promulgated by Paul VI
\$.45 88 pages
CONSTITUTION ON ECUMENISM - promulgated by Paul VI
\$.25 32 pages

Daughters of St. Paul
50 St. Paul's Avenue
Jamaica Plain, Mass. 02130